

## 9

Horace *Epode* 9: Some New Interpretations<sup>1</sup>

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## I. Introduction

It is inevitable that any Augustan poem associated with the battle of Actium will give rise to a great deal of scholarly comment; and the volume of comment will be greater when the poem's internal importance in its book is guaranteed by its central position. But no other "Actium" poem has created so much controversy as the ninth epode. Scholars have begun with the supposition that Horace is attempting in it to give an account of the battle of Actium and its aftermath. They have then been led by the vagueness of this supposed account to adopt a variety of hypotheses: Horace wrote the epode before the actual battle; or when only its early stages had taken place; he wrote it after the battle; he wrote it when the battle was just over and before details of the flight of Antonius were known; he was present at the battle; he was not present at the battle, but heard the news, or some part of it, at Rome, and composed the epode there; perhaps under these last circumstances he made some of the details up; or he wrote different parts of the epode at different times; or he wrote it with "prophetic vision." These permutations, which have been propounded over the last hundred or so years, are recorded by Wistrand; and they are offered in detailed form in the many papers and commentaries upon the epode which have appeared both before and after that pamphlet.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>I am much indebted to Mr. I. M. LeM. DuQuesnay for comments on this paper and additional information. His assent to its conclusions should not be assumed.

<sup>2</sup>Full bibliographical information can be found in: Erik Wistrand, *Horace's Ninth Epode and its Historical Background* (Studia Graeca et Latina Gothoburgensia VIII, Göteborg 1958); Gabriele Draeger and Monika Angermann, *Horaz-Bibliographie, seit 1950 bis zum Horatium* (Berlin 1975); Walter Kissel, "Horaz 1936-1975: Eine Gesamtbibliographie," *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt* II. 31. 3, *Principat: Sprache und*

Only one attempt seems to have been made to bypass this welter of hypotheses. Emphasizing that *Epode* 9 is a poem and not a news bulletin, Williams argued vigorously against the idea that "the real question to be asked is: 'When was the poem written?'" (p. 215).<sup>3</sup> Instead Williams looked in it for recognizable literary techniques and conventions, and so came to realize that the celebration proposed at the beginning of the epode is the one which is actually seen taking place at its end. In this way he decided that the dramatic, but of course not necessarily the real, date of the epode lies after Actium but before the conquest of Egypt and Octavianus' subsequent triumph.

This general approach to the epode must surely be correct; and the poem's relationship to the early Greek symposiastic tradition warns us not to look in it for detailed historical information.<sup>4</sup> Rather, the inspiration for it lies in Greek lyric summaries of epic narratives, where the criteria for choice of material are basically the same as in Hellenistic poetry: sensory vividness and picturesqueness, conceptual grotesquerie, emotional, moral and psychological interest, learning and antiquarianism,<sup>5</sup> exactly as Propertius IV. 6, another "Actium" poem central to its book and with a more complex Greek background, prefers to relate "myths" about the battle rather than to follow the detailed strategy and tactics of the campaign.<sup>6</sup>

In this study I wish to offer new interpretations of various aspects of *Epode* 9. First the overall choice of material in verses 7-20 — the section of the epode dealing with recent Roman history — will be examined. Then Horace's treatment of "Africanus" (v. 25) will be

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*Literatur*, ed. Wolfgang Haase, (Berlin-New York 1981), pp. 1472 ff.; and Aldo Setaioli, "Gli 'Epodi' di Orazio nella critica del 1937 al 1972," *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt* II. 31. 3, *Principat: Sprache und Literatur*, ed. Wolfgang Haase, (Berlin-New York 1981), pp. 1716-1732. I have referred only to work relevant to specific points. Professor M. J. McGann's forthcoming paper on *Epode* 9, which approaches it from a different point of view, was made available to me at an early stage in my preparation of this paper.

<sup>3</sup>Gordon Williams, *Tradition and Originality in Roman Poetry* (Oxford 1968), pp. 212 ff.

<sup>4</sup>For this approach see also Christfried Bartels, "Die neunte Epode des Horaz als sympotisches Gedicht," *Hermes* 101 (1973), pp. 282-313.

<sup>5</sup>See Francis Cairns, *Tibullus: a Hellenistic Poet at Rome* (Cambridge 1979), Ch. 1.

<sup>6</sup>In "Properzio 4, 6: manierismo ellenistico e classicismo augusteo," to appear in the *Atti of the Colloquium Propertianum (tertium)* 1981, a paper delivered by me at the Colloquium Propertianum in Assisi in May 1981, I adumbrated an interpretation of Propertius IV. 6 which stresses this aspect of it. A fuller canonical English version will appear in a volume forthcoming from the Cambridge University Press, dedicated to poetry and politics in the Augustan Age, edited by Prof. D. A. West and Prof. A. J. Woodman.

discussed, and new interpretations will be offered both of vv. 27-32 and of *sinistrorsum* in v. 20. In conclusion some observations will be made on Horace's poetic techniques in *Epode* 9.

## II. Recent History: verses 7-20

In vv. 7-20 Horace refers first to his earlier celebration of the defeat of Sex. Pompeius at Naulochus in 35 B.C. (vv. 7-10). There is an indirect allusion to the battle of Actium in the word *actus* (v. 7). This is a piece of creative etymologizing of a type common in Augustan poetry<sup>7</sup> and it is intended to reinforce (cf. *ut nuper*, v. 7) the analogies between the two sea-battles — with Pompeius and with Antonius — and, by implication, the analogous character of these two adversaries of Octavianus. Horace mocks Pompeius' blasphemous and, as his defeat at sea showed, false self-association with Neptune in *Neptunius...dux* (vv. 7 ff.), linking it to his supposed threat, known to be equally vain and implied to be equally blasphemous, that he would place upon Rome the chains which he had removed from his own slaves (vv. 9 ff.). The concept of slavery is used as a bridge to introduce the forces more recently opposed to Octavianus. The Romans among these, Horace claims, have voluntarily made themselves slaves to a woman, Cleopatra, the present archenemy of Rome (v. 12) and to her eunuchs (vv. 13 ff., esp. *servire*). As a contrast with these servile Romans opposing Octavianus, Horace introduces the Galatians of Amyntas, who deserted to Octavianus before Actium (vv. 17 ff.). By calling the Galatians *Galli* and not *Galatae* or *Gallograeci*, Horace first of all is being precise in his ethnography by specifying that the Galatians originated in Gallic tribes who settled in Asia Minor,<sup>8</sup> and thus he is demonstrating *doctrina* of the type generally affected by Hellenistic and Augustan poets.<sup>9</sup> He is also, by combining this term with *Caesarem* (v. 18), making a political point through an allusion to Julius Caesar's conquest of Gaul and to the subsequent attachment of the Gauls to his, and hence to Octavianus's, *clientela*.<sup>10</sup> Horace is suggesting that the Galatians are not deserters betraying their cause but are really virtuous Caesarians who are returning to their true and natural allegiance. They are doing so bravely in a situation of danger, one in which some servile Roman citizens remained obedient to Cleopatra and her eunuchs, and in which Cleopatra's cowardly Egyptian fleet lurks in port (vv. 19 ff.).

<sup>7</sup>Cf. Cairns (above, note 5), Ch. 4.

<sup>8</sup>Cf. *RE* s.v. *Galatia*, pp. 522 ff.; *Der Kleine Pauly* s.v. *Galatia*.

<sup>9</sup>On geography and ethnology as learned Alexandrian interests, cf. P. M. Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria I* (Oxford 1972), pp. 520 ff.

The factual element in vv. 7-20 is minor; and although vv. 11-20 relate to the battle of Actium, they cannot be said to "describe" any part of it. Horace, as befits the heir of Callimachus in his *Iambi*, and as is typical of Augustan poets, is highly moral in his emphasis: boastful Sex. Pompeius; his flight (v. 8); his threat (vv. 9 ff.); the contrast between slaves and free (vv. 10, 11 ff.); treachery (*perfidis*, v. 10); a woman and her eunuchs (vv. 12-14); bravery (vv. 17 ff.) and cowardice (vv. 19 ff.). Hellenistic sensory interest is also prominent:<sup>11</sup> the grotesque premature wrinkles of the Egyptian eunuchs; the sun glinting on the alien mosquito net amid the Roman standards; and the war cry of the Galatians.

Horace is not simply following a literary course here; he has chosen this poetic technique because it is apt for his main propaganda purpose — to disguise as far as possible the civil element of the Actian war, and indeed of the war with Pompeius, and to represent the first as a war against slaves and the second as a war against foreigners. This was of course the official Augustan position:

Mare pacavi a praedonibus. Eo bello servorum qui fugerant a dominis suis et arma contra rem publicam ceperant triginta fere millia...tradidi (*Res Gestae* 25);

Aegyptum imperio populi Romani adieci...antea Siciliam et Sardiniam occupatas bello servili reciperavi...(*ibid.*, 27).

Note too the deliberate avoidance of Antonius' name in the account of the Actian war in *Res Gestae* 24 and 25.

### III. Past History: Africanus

The train of thought is abruptly broken at v. 21 with the invocation *Io Triumphe*, which is repeated at v. 23. The two invocations imply the successful conclusion of the second war, as of the first, and they modulate in v. 23 into reminiscences of Rome's past triumphs; Octavianus will be a greater *triumphator* than C. Marius, from whom Julius Caesar inherited his political platform. He is greater also than "Africanus."

The identification of Africanus as the elder Scipio is not unquestioned<sup>12</sup> and, as Bentley saw long ago, there is some conflation here of the elder Scipio, who defeated Hannibal, and the younger Scipio, who destroyed Carthage. Horace will naturally not himself have been confused about the historical facts. He simply wanted to adopt a peculiarly

<sup>10</sup>On the general principle, cf. *RE* s.v. *Clientes*, pp. 26 ff.

<sup>11</sup>Cf. Cairns (above, note 5) "General Index" s.v. *sensory emphasis*.

<sup>12</sup>On the controversy, cf. Bartels (above, note 4), p. 300.

Roman way of looking at men of the same family by conflating the pair.<sup>13</sup> But the elder Africanus is the more prominent in Horace's mind. A similar proceeding on Horace's part in *Odes* IV. 8. 13-20 has caused unnecessary doubts about the genuineness of some lines:<sup>14</sup>

non incisa notis marmora publicis,  
per quae spiritus et vita redivit bonis  
post mortem ducibus, non celeres fugae  
relictæque retrorsum Hannibalis minae,  
non incendia Carthaginis impiae  
eius, qui domita nomen ab Africa  
lucratus rediit, clarius indicant  
laudes quem Calabrae Pierides.

The second and third Punic Wars are assimilated here as well as the two Scipiones, and in this way the eventual destruction of Carthage is associated by implication with the elder Scipio rather than the younger. Accordingly, Horace is able to identify the poetic celebration by Ennius of the elder Scipio as the lasting reason for his fame; his tomb, possibly a subject of controversy,<sup>15</sup> and its inscription, are relegated to a lower place in preserving his reputation, in accordance with the conventional assertion that poetry outlives monuments.<sup>16</sup> One may best compare Statius, *Silvae* II. 7. 72, where Lucan's *Pharsalia* is described as *Pompeio sepulchrum*.<sup>17</sup> It is of particular interest that Horace appears to be referring again at *Epode* 9. 26 to the same controversy over Scipio's tomb, and again by implication to Ennius' poem, which is once more represented as the true lasting memorial of Scipio Africanus. The implication is achieved by mention of Africanus' *virtus* (*Epode* 9. 26); this made him the subject of Ennius' poem and assured that his fame outlasted Carthage. Another Scipionic conflation can be seen at *Odes* II. 12. 1-4, discussed below.

This interpretation, which is an old but sound one (cf. Bentley *ad loc.*), and the new interpretation, which will be offered of vv. 27 ff., are mutually supportive; and both are confirmed by the abundant historical interest of the epode, first in Sex. Pompeius, then in Jugurtha, and

<sup>13</sup>The most outstanding example of this tendency is the topos of the glory reflected by descendants on their ancestors; cf. Cairns (above, note 5), p. 131, n. 41. See below for further arguments about this conflation.

<sup>14</sup>Cf. Hans Peter Syndikus, *Die Lyrik des Horaz. Eine Interpretation der Oden. Band II. Drittes und viertes Buch*, (Darmstadt 1973), pp. 364 ff.

<sup>15</sup>The evidence for this is however slight, being confined to the scholiasts on Horace. It may be nothing more than fiction invented to explain the reference.

<sup>16</sup>In Horace's work *Odes* III. 30 is a notable example.

<sup>17</sup>Cf. Bartels (above, note 4), p. 299.

then in the Hannibalic war.

#### IV. Past History: verses 27-32

All previous commentators have assumed that vv. 27-32 describe M. Antonius and his flight after the battle of Actium. This view creates a number of severe problems, since Antonius (a) was not defeated on land, (b) did not go or attempt to go to Crete, (c) was not involved with the Syrtes, (d) did not flee in a state of uncertainty but went in a straight line to Egypt, touching land at Tainarum in Southern Laconia and then going on to Paraetionium (Marsa Matruh) on the Egyptian coast,<sup>18</sup> from where he first sent Cleopatra on to Alexandria and then went there himself. No doubt each of these embarrassments could be explained away if it stood alone. But as a group the descriptions simply do not fit M. Antonius; and this is the reason for the welter of peculiar suggestions made by scholars about the information available to Horace when he was writing *Epode* 9 and about the time when he wrote it.

All these problems disappear on one simple hypothesis: just as *Odes* IV. 8. 13-20 (quoted above) associates the glory of Africanus with the *celeres fugae* of Hannibal, so the *victus hostis* of *Epode* 9. 27, who follows immediately after the mention of Africanus and Carthage in vv. 25 ff., is none other than Hannibal, so that the striking asyndeton which comes in the interval at v. 27 is the typical explanatory-amplificatory asyndeton of early Greek lyric.<sup>19</sup> In linking the flight of Hannibal with the elder Scipio Africanus' victory at Zama and his subsequent triumph at *Epode* 9. 25 ff., Horace is being just as sketchy in historical terms as he is at *Odes* IV. 8. 15 ff. when, as noted above, he seems to be linking the destruction of Carthage with the elder rather than the younger Scipio and then goes on to speak of Hannibal's *celeres fugae* in the same context. Hannibal's first flight (which was from Carthage) took place in fact not immediately after the victory of Rome in the second Punic war, but some time later, when his enemies in Carthage had induced the Romans to accuse him of communication with King Antiochus. His second flight, this time from King

<sup>18</sup>The sources are Plutarch, *Ant.* 69; Dio 51. 5; Orosius VI. 19. 11 ff. Plutarch and Dio speak of Paraetionium as being in Libya, which it may have been in ancient, but not modern, terms. Orosius is better aware of the strategic situation when he speaks of *duo Aegypti cornua Pelusium Parethoniumque* (VI. 19. 13) (cf. *Parethonium, primam Aegypti a Libyae parte civitatem*, VI. 19. 15). At all events, Paraetionium (Marsa Matruh) is nowhere near either of the Syrtes.

<sup>19</sup>Cf. Francis Cairns, "Splendide Mendax: Horace *Odes* III. 11," *Greece and Rome* 22 (1975), p. 130 and n. 10; not (*pace* Williams [above, note 3], p. 217) "contrasting asyndeton."

Antiochus' court, was again later.

Horace gives various details of his *hostis'* actions in *Epode* 9. 27-32. Some can be elucidated from other sources dealing with Hannibal's flights. Livy records the first flight as follows:

itaque cedere tempori et fortunae statuit, et praeparatis iam ante omnibus ad fugam, obversatus eo die in foro avertendae suspicionis causa, primis tenebris vestitu forensi ad portam cum duobus comitibus ignaris consilii est egressus. cum equi, quo in loco iusserat, praesto fuissent, nocte Byzacium — ita regionem quandam Afri vocant — transgressus, postero die ad mare inter Acyllam et Thapsum ad suam turrem pervenit. ibi eum parata instructaque remigio excepit navis. ita Africa Hannibal excessit, saepius patriae quam suum eventum miseratus. eodem die in Cercinam insulam traiecit. (XXXIII. 47 ff.)

If Livy's account had been lost, we would have had to assume that the *punicum* of *Epode* 9. 27 was a *punicum sagum*, a purple military cloak which Horace supposed Hannibal wore on the analogy of the purple *sagum* worn by Roman military commanders (cf. *OLD* s.vv. *sagulum*, *sagum*). Hannibal's changing out of it and into a common soldier's *lugubre sagum* would then be another simple case of the topos of defeated generals changing their garments, found also in Plutarch and Velleius. Plutarch, *Caesar* 45. 729, records that Pompey doffed his general's cloak after Pharsalia; so did Lepidus as Velleius notes (2. 80), after being deserted by his soldiers. In the latter description we might compare *pulloque...amiculo* (of the replacement clothing donned by Lepidus), with the *lugubre...sagum* of *Epode* 9. 28. But Livy's specific information about Hannibal's garb at the time of his first flight suggests a modified approach. Hannibal was at this time, as Livy tells us (XXXIII. 46. 3), *praetor*, that is, one of the two suffetes who were the supreme magistrates at Carthage. Justinus (XXXI. 2. 6) calls him *tum temporis consulem*. Having thus in the immediately preceding passage stressed that Hannibal was suffete, Livy then tells us that Hannibal left Carthage wearing his *vestitus forensis* in order to allay suspicion. In context this must mean his suffete's robe. Now we do not know what suffetes wore — and Livy probably had no clear idea on the subject — but Romans would have assumed that the suffetes wore what their Roman equivalents did, the purple-striped *toga praetexta*.<sup>20</sup> The *punicum* thus may be the *toga praetexta*.

<sup>20</sup>Purple robes had of course royal associations (Cic. *Phil.* 2. 34 and Mayor *ad loc.*; Serv. *ad Aen.* VII. 612) and the suffetes were often described as *reges* (cf. *Der Kleine Pauly* s.v. *sufeten*). If this association was paramount in Roman minds, then the *punicum* might be a *trabea*.

The point is not of major importance; and it is possible that Horace did not know the *vestitus forensis* story. We must remember also that Livy does not say that Hannibal then doffed his *vestitus forensis*, although he can hardly have thought that he went to sea in it. Horace could then simply be using the standard topos in a standard form, so that the *punicum* doffed by Hannibal is a purple *sagum*. But it would be strange if Horace did not know the *vestitus forensis* tale and even stranger if he had ignored it. There is also another slight advantage in the view that Horace meant *punicum* as "consul's robe." The terms *saga sumere* and *ad saga ire* meant "to go to war" (cf. *OLD* s.vv.citt.). If Horace is saying that Hannibal doffed a civilian robe and put on a *sagum*, there is the additional degradation for Hannibal that, having been thoroughly defeated as a general by Rome and Africanus in the past, he is now forced to leave civilian life and go to war again — and this time in a common soldier's *sagum*.

Both suppositions are consonant with Horace's liking for word-plays on *Poenus* and terms for purple in contexts where Hannibal is involved. The other relevant passages may be quoted here since they will be referred to again below:

Nolis longa ferae bella Numantiae  
nec durum **Hannibalem** nec Siculum mare  
**Poenopurpleum sanguine** mollibus  
aptari citharae modis,... (*Odes* II. 12. 1-4)

non his iuventus orta parentibus  
**infecit** aequor **sanguine Punico**,  
Pyrrhumque et ingentem cecidit  
Antiochum **Hannibalemque** dirum,... (*Odes*, III. 6. 33-36)

Another detail in Horace's account of the movements of the *victus hostis* (v. 27) also fits Hannibal's first flight. After leaving Africa Hannibal first *eodem die in Cercinam insulam traiecit* (Livy XXXIII. 48). The island of Cercina lies in the Syrtis Minor off the coast of Africa; and Horace notes that his *hostis, exercitatus aut petit Syrtis Noto* (v. 31). From there Hannibal, on his first flight, sailed to Tyre, then to Antiochea, then to Daphne and finally to Ephesus, where he met King Antiochus. None of these places is in Crete, which Horace refers to in the Homerizing expression *centum nobilem Cretam urbibus* (v. 29).<sup>21</sup> But on his second flight Hannibal did indeed go to Crete (Nepos, *Hannibal* 9; Justinus XXXII. 4. 3 ff.). He resided at Gortyn in Crete for some time and played, at any rate in popular belief, a celebrated trick upon

<sup>21</sup>Κρήτη ἐκατόμπολις, *Iliad* II. 649 and also *Odes* III. 27. 33 ff.



the citizens of that town. It looks as though, just as Horace conflates the two Scipiones here, in *Odes* IV. 8. 13 ff. and elsewhere (see below), and just as he conflates the two flights of Hannibal in *celeris fugae* at *Odes* IV. 8. 15, so he is conflating Hannibal's two flights again in *Epode* 9.

Horace's phrase about Hannibal, *terra marique victus* (v. 27) can be explained in two different ways. On the first explanation Hannibal was defeated by Scipio Africanus the elder at Zama on land, and, at a later point, he suffered defeat in a sea-battle at the hands of the Rhodians at Side (Livy XXXVII. 23 f.; Nepos, *Hannibal* 8. 4). The second explanation is suggested first by *Odes* II. 12. 1-4 (quoted above) — see Nisbet-Hubbard *ad loc.* Here Horace conflates the Roman victories at sea in the first Punic war (vv. 2 ff.) and Hannibal's defeat in the second Punic war (v. 2), and for good measure combines this with yet another Scipionic conflation, between Scipio Africanus the younger, victor at Numantia (v. 1) (and also destroyer of Carthage), and Scipio Africanus the elder (v. 2). The explanation is reinforced by *Odes* III. 6. 33-36 (also quoted above), where the Roman naval victories of the first Punic war are linked with the Roman victory over Pyrrhus and then with two defeats of Hannibal, at Zama and later when he was the general of Antiochus. If confluations like these are in play in *Epode* 9. 27, then the *mari* element of *terra marique victus* could refer to the naval battles of the first Punic war, so that in vv. 25-28 all three Punic wars were being referred to.

Horace's remaining words about Hannibal, *ventis iturus non suis* (v. 30) and *incerto mari* (v. 32), may refer to his uncertainty about his ultimate destination on his second flight. Keller-Holder *ad loc.* produce examples of such uncertainty — cf. esp. Seneca *Epistles* 71. 3: *ignoranti, quem portum petat, nullus suus ventus est*. It is perhaps more likely, however, that just as the change of dress derives from a standard description of the flights of famous leaders, so this idea also does. Whatever one decides about this point, it is interesting that the prophecy of Hannibal's second exile in Silius Italicus *Punica* 13. 885-87 displays some similar phraseology:

post Itala bella  
Assyrio famulus regi falsusque cupiti  
Ausoniae motus, **dubio** petet aequora velo....

The interpretation offered of vv. 25-32 involves hypothesizing a certain amount of temporal dislocation in Horace's account of Hannibal. In itself this is not a difficult hypothesis, since such temporal dislocations, like the episodic narrative technique employed by Horace in the

epode, are perfectly in keeping with its literary background. The epodes, as is well known, are inspired by the early Greek iambographers Archilochus and Hipponax, and by the Hellenistic iambographer Callimachus. In both traditions such temporal distortions are common;<sup>22</sup> and it should be remembered that Horace is working within a living Greek Hellenistic tradition as transferred to Rome. But there are also more particular indications to support the notion that Horace is distorting chronology here. In this very epode chronology is reversed in the progression from Sex. Pompeius to Jugurtha to Africanus. Again, among the other Horatian passages relating to Hannibal, *Odes* IV. 8. 15 ff. reverses the chronological order of Hannibal's *reiectaeque...minae* (v. 16) and of his *celeres fugae* (v. 15) before returning to chronological order with the *incendia Carthaginis* (v. 17); *Odes* II. 12. 1-4 present the Numantine war, the second Punic war and the first Punic war in reverse temporal order; in *Odes* III. 6. 33-36 the first Punic war is followed by the previous defeat of Pyrrhus and then by Antiochus before Hannibal, who was an earlier adversary of Rome as well as a joint adversary of Rome along with Antiochus, makes his appearance. Finally in *Epode* 16, in another context involving Hannibal, an even more colorful welter of temporal dislocations can be found:

quam neque finitimi valuerunt perdere Marsi  
 minacis aut Etrusca Porsenae manus,  
 aemula nec virtus Capuae nec Spartacus acer  
 novisque rebus infidelis Allobrox,  
 nec fera caerulea domuit Germania pube  
 parentibusque abominatus Hannibal,... (*Epode* 16. 3-8)

It is quite clear then that Horace does not feel bound to follow strict chronological sequence when using historical *exempla*. An interesting additional, and non-Horatian example, of temporal dislocation in exactly the same type of context, which unites the victory of Augustus at Actium and a number of parallels from past Roman history including Hannibal, and a mode of treatment not dissimilar to that seen in *Epode* 9, is Propertius III. 11. 29-72.

If this interpretation of vv. 27-32 is correct,<sup>23</sup> then various consequences follow. On a minor level *petit* (v. 31) and *fertur* (v. 32) are

<sup>22</sup>Cf. Cairns (above, note 5), "General Index" s.v. *temporal dislocation* etc.

<sup>23</sup>A skeptic who believed that the *hostiliumque navium* (v. 19) referred to the ships of Antonius and Cleopatra, rather than just to those of Cleopatra, might claim that *hostilium* there argued against the identification of the *hostis* of v. 27 as Hannibal. But Horace in this epode quite deliberately repeats the same words with different references. So *dux* (v. 8) is Sex. Pompeius, whereas *ducem* (v. 24) is Octavianus. Similarly *navibus* (v. 8) are those of Sex. Pompeius and *navium* (v. 19) those of Cleopatra.

historic presents.<sup>24</sup> More important, the epode can be seen to be even less a description of the battle of Actium than some have thought. Rather it is Horace's meditation on the victory of Actium, as he places it within a Roman historical context. Cleopatra is mentioned, but she is dealt with briskly (v. 12). M. Antonius is not actually mentioned at all: he is glimpsed only indirectly through the filter of some of Rome's most notorious enemies, Sex. Pompeius, Jugurtha and Hannibal. The implication throughout is of course that Antonius is a *hostis* of the Roman people.

#### V. The Enemy Fleet: verses 19 ff.

Scholars have sought with little success to elicit from these two lines conclusions about the maneuvers and disposition of the Egyptian fleet. The stumbling block has been *sinistrorsum*, a word which appears to have no technical status in Roman naval or military language. A new approach is needed. The Homeric allusion of v. 29 has already been noted; and indeed it is only one of many such Horatian translations of Homeric terms and phrases found throughout his work.<sup>25</sup> Now in v. 20 the phrase *puppēs...citae* (cf. the similar phrase in another Actian poem, *Odes*, I. 37. 2, *nec latentes / classe cita reparavit oras*) translates the Homeric phrase *θοαὶ νῆες*. This suggests that *sinistrorsum* translates its equally literal Homeric equivalent *ἐπ' ἀριστερά*.

But what significance could *sinistrorsum* have, if it does so? *ἐπ' ἀριστερά* occurs thirteen times in the *Iliad*. There was some controversy in antiquity over its meaning, as can be seen both from the Homeric scholia on *Iliad* VII. 238 and from Eustathius *ad loc.* One of the explanations offered by the scholia and Eustathius of this phrase and of its opposite *ἐπὶ δεξιὰ* is extremely apposite for *Epode* 9. 19 ff.: *δεξιὰ μὲν τὸ διώκειν, ἀριστερὰ δὲ τὸ φεύγειν* (Schol. Σ234 al.). Schol. BCE<sup>3</sup>E<sup>4</sup> offer a muddled variant of the same gloss: *ἢ τὸ μὲν νικᾶν καὶ διώκειν ἐπὶ δεξιὰ κινεῖν εἶπε τὴν ἀσπίδα διὰ τὸ πρακτικὸν τῶν δεξιῶν, τὸ δὲ φεύγειν καὶ ἡττᾶσθαι ἐπ' ἀριστερὰ κινεῖν φησὶν εὐφημότερον...τὸ δὲ φεύγειν ἐπ' ἀριστερὰ λέγει νωμᾶν. τηνικαῦτα γὰρ ἐξ ἀριστερῶν αὐτὴν ἔχει τοῦ διώκοντος*. (Eustathius 679. 15-19)

In these terms, *ἐπ' ἀριστερά* signifies fleeing and being defeated. Now we know that Hellenistic and Roman poets were familiar not only

<sup>24</sup>Therefore not, with Wistrand (above, note 2), pp. 49 ff., "prophetic presents." On historic presents see Nisbet-Hubbard on *Odes* I. 34. 12.

<sup>25</sup>Theodor Arnold and Wilhelm Fries, *Die griechischen Studien des Horaz* (Halle 1891), pp. 12 ff.

with Homer but also with the ancient commentaries on Homer,<sup>26</sup> that controversies upon disputed phrases interested them particularly, and that they frequently offer implied interpretations of such phrases in their learned poetry. Horace is showing his knowledge of, and verdict upon, the Homeric problem of the meaning of ἐπ' ἀριστερά. At the same time he is elegantly conveying the notion that the swift prow of the enemy ships lurk in harbor in flight and in defeat. The reference is of course to the flight to Egypt of Cleopatra and her ships, which, technically speaking, had not actually been defeated in the battle.

Further confirmation that Horace is translating Homeric ἐπ' ἀριστερά in *sinistrorsum*, and that he is alluding to a gloss upon it of the type found in the scholia and Eustathius, comes from *Iliad* XII. 108-19. Here the Trojan Hyrtacides rashly decides to attack the Greek ships. He comes in his chariot close up to the νήεσσι θοῇσι (112); and (118) εἵσατο ("went") — *v.l.* εἵσατο ("lurked") — νηῶν ἐπ' ἀριστερά ("to the left of the ships").<sup>27</sup> The phrases "swift ships," "lurking"<sup>28</sup> (*latent*), and "to the left of the ships" all come together in this passage. It is unlikely that the inspiration is direct; rather we have in this passage the Homeric original of a lost Greek intermediary or intermediaries known to Horace — probably early Greek but possibly Hellenistic — which may already have incorporated some such explanation of ἐπ' ἀριστερά.

## VI. Some General Observations

The interpretations advanced above gain further useful confirmation from the fact that they bring the epode into conformity with other Horatian and Augustan poetry in three significant ways.

(a) The compositional technique of *Epode* 9 now reveals itself as similar to that found in some of the odes; for a substantial part of the poem Horace moves away from the matter at hand into a train of myth or historical *exempla* which is nevertheless rich, like its early Greek

<sup>26</sup>Hellenistic Greek literary *Homerkritik* is common knowledge. For major Roman interest in this area, cf. Robin Schlunk *The Homeric Scholia and the Aeneid*, (Ann Arbor 1974).

<sup>27</sup>Νηῶν ἐπ' ἀριστερά also occurs at *Iliad* XIII. 675.

<sup>28</sup>If *portu latent* represents a Greek original ναυλοχοῦσι (as Mr. DuQuesnay suggests to me) then the intermediary hypothesis becomes even more attractive since ναυλοχέω often means not just "to lie in harbor" but "to lurk in harbor in ambush" (cf. *LSJ* s.v.). This nuance is not appropriate to *Epode* 9. 19 ff. but it fits a putative εἵσατο precisely — and it is just the sort of nuance to be lost or abandoned in transmission. The word ναυλοχέω would of course have interested Horace in this context, given Sex. Pompeius was defeated at Naulochus (*Epode* 9. 7 ff.).

antecedents, in associative and illustrative value for the main theme. *Odes* I. 7 and III. 27 are outstanding examples of this technique; but it is much more widespread.

(b) The conceptual structure of the epode — a typical ring-composition — and the typical Hellenistic pattern of balanced asymmetry<sup>29</sup> within it (C1 expanded, C2 contracted; B2 expanded more than B1 in compensation) become clear once Sex. Pompeius can be seen to have Hannibal as his structural counterpart.<sup>30</sup> The thematic outline is something as follows:

A1	1-6	The symposiastic celebration (cf. <i>Caecubum</i> , 1)
B1	7-10	The great former victory of Octavianus over Sex. Pompeius
C1	11-20	a) 11-16 The present enemy Cleopatra b) 17-20 also defeated by Octavianus
D	21-23	The future triumph of Octavianus [center]
C2	23-24	The past victory and triumph of C. Marius over Jugurtha
B2	25-32	The great former victory and triumph of Scipio Africanus over Hannibal, and its consequences
A2	33-38	The symposiastic celebration (cf. <i>Caecubum</i> , 36).

A clear temporal structure<sup>31</sup> can also be seen within these themes, and this balances in some measure the temporal dislocations examined above.

(c) Since the epode can now be seen to deal in the main with the African enemies of Rome, Cleopatra, Jugurtha and Hannibal, its view of Actium is the same as that presented by Virgil in the *Aeneid*: the Actian war is the final surfacing of a longstanding hostility between Rome and African nations, which originated in the love-affair between Dido and Aeneas, and which in the past expressed itself most severely in the wars between Rome and Carthage.

<sup>29</sup>On both features see Cairns (above, note 5), Ch. 8.

<sup>30</sup>It is particularly interesting that Sex. Pompeius in *Epode* 9 fled (*fugit*, v. 8) and used threats (*minatus*, v. 9) while in *Odes* IV. 8. 15 ff. the words *celeris fugae* / *reiectaeque retrorsum Hannibalis minae* apply to Hannibal.

<sup>31</sup>Cf. Cairns (above, note 5), pp. 212 ff.

The only Roman enemy now mentioned in *Epode* 9 is the renegade and pirate Sex. Pompeius. M. Antonius appears nowhere in person. In this, as in many other features, *Epode* 9 moves closer to *Odes* I. 37, as indeed to Propertius III. 11 and IV. 6. In such Augustan "Actium" poems the contemporary enemy on whom the limelight falls is Cleopatra, and Antony is either ignored or receives scant explicit mention — a reflection of official Augustan propaganda, in which the Actian war was not a civil war, but a foreign war against the Queen of Egypt, Cleopatra.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>32</sup>On this aspect cf. already Williams (above, note 3), pp. 217 ff.